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## AN IMPROVISED MANTEL.

THE accompanying sketch represents an improvised mantel that adorns the studio occupied by Miss Elizabeth T. Bonsall and Miss Ebbinghausen in Philadelphia. This room, a very large one, is furnished with screens, curtains and the ordinary studio accessories, the mantel, which forms one of its attractive features, having been designed by the young artists to conceal a bare spot on the frescoed wall, where a large picture formerly hung. As the effect is very good, and the expense slight, a description of the mantel may prove useful to artists who do not wish to expend much on studio furnishing, and yet desire to have pleasing effects. A wooden shelf is fastened against the wall, supported on either side by a succession of smaller shelves. These are of wood, stained brown, but may be colored to look like cherry, ebony or walnut. These little shelves form a convenient repository for bric-a-brac. The mantel shelf is covered with a lambrequin of dark brown cloth, bordered with burlap, fringed; long pieces of burlap fall on either side of the shelf, concealing the wooden ends; these are ornamented with needle-work in brown, cat-tails and leaves embroidered in long stitches. In the space occupied by the andirons and logs in a genuine fireplace, a small divan has been placed, above which hangs a handsome metal plaque. This divan is also of use, as the lid is on hinges, and the box underneath affords a convenient receptacle for studio properties, draperies, etc. The wall above the mantel is draped in dark brown cloth, which forms a good back ground to bring out a number of original casts that the artists have hung against it, among these a cast of a horse's head, surmounted by turkey wings, making an original Pegasus.

On the right hand side of the mantel is a bowl, which resembles Cloisonné, but in reality is an ingenious bit of decorative work. The bowl is a wooden one, such as dairy maids use in butter making. The ground is painted a dark olive brown shade, covered with a tracery of fine figures in gold, upon which are thrown some blue conventional flowers and a full spray of red poinsettia. The effect of the wooden bowl, thus treated, is of china inlaid with metal. Around the edge is a double row of brass headed tacks, pointed and round, the pointed on the outside.

Miss Bonsall and Miss Ebbinghausen work in oils, in water colors, and, like many of our Philadelphia artists, in etchings, Miss Bonsall has now upon her easel a small study in oil of the portion of her studio just described, with the addition of the figure of a dark-haired child seated on the rug before the mantel leaning against the low divan, on which rests a volume of fairy lore, upon whose pages the little girl is intent.

**MIXED COLORS.**—It is in the innumerable mixed tints and hues in combination with elementary colors and constituent primaries, that afford in decorative arrangements the highest chromatic development. One leading condition of skill in the management is the nicest sense of detection of preponderating color. Any color may be artistically brought together, provided the shades are properly selected.

## STAMPED LEATHER.

SOME beautiful effects can be obtained in stamped leather, but the modern work in that material is of so dubious a permanency that its general use can hardly be recommended as yet. An honest tradesman—what a pity that any tradesman should have to be particularized in that way!—who saw a customer examining a hall chair as tall and lordly as a throne, said: "That chair is pretty cheap, considering the work on it, and you'd probably get your money's worth out of it, but I can't recommend you to buy it, because that big panel of stamped leather, representing, as you see, an old man's head, which is the chief beauty of the chair, will flatten and crack and sag in. Perhaps it is in too high relief, or perhaps the leather has been treated with chemicals to soften it, that have injured its substance; and that bronze powdered over the surface to make it look like oxidized silver—which is false art, it seems to me, for everybody knows it is intended to be leather—comes off in spots, and makes it look bare and ragged. If you could keep the chair looking as it does now, you could hardly ask for anything

better; but it's best to tell you exactly what you are getting, for I don't want you to come here and demand your money back in two or three weeks."

Stamped and tinted leather seems to come best into play for purely ornamental work, where it will not be subjected to handling or pressure. Leather tile, if they could be called such, have been used with an effect quite charming as panels for the doors of small cabinets, panels for the fronts of upright pianos, backings for sconces and towel-racks, and such like. The well-known medallion in relief, representing Sleep, has been reproduced in leather, and could be wrought into the ornamentation of the headboard of a bed. There are fruit and game pieces that can be employed as decoration for the sideboard; indeed, its possibilities are manifold, as one may discover by studying the uses to which Lincrusta-Walton, an imitation of leather, have recently been put. It is one of the primary laws of decorative art, however, that there should be a relation between material and purpose, and leather will not, of course, serve as general decoration. There is a prevalent tendency to strain this point, and we find false applications of material for mere sake of novelty.

